

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 416

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should become an international human rights leader by ratifying and implementing certain core international conventions.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2009

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HONDA, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, and Mr. RANGEL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should become an international human rights leader by ratifying and implementing certain core international conventions.

Whereas the United States has played a leading role in developing global human rights standards since the country's inception;

Whereas the United States Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, are among the

guiding principles which helped develop the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, led the United States delegation and the United Nations (UN) in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas, December 10, 2008, marked the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly also adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966;

Whereas the world celebrated the 201st anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on May 1, 2008;

Whereas, on January 1, 2008, the United States recognized the 145th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation;

Whereas the United States continues to make legislative amendments that improve the rights of all Americans; these include the 13th Amendment in 1865, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the 14th Amendment, the 19th Amendment, the Social Security Act of 1935, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the Housing Act of 1949, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, and the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization of 2006;

Whereas the development of human and civil rights standards and protections requires constant review and attention;

Whereas the UN Millennium Development Goals set forth a fifteen-year plan to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination;

Whereas there are as many as 27 million people around the world who remain enslaved;

Whereas the United States has supported the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the UN General Assembly and has ratified significant international human rights treaties that include the International Conventions on the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination, on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas the United States has ratified two of the eight “fundamental” conventions outlined by the International Labor Organization (ILO) including the Abolition of Forced Labour, and the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;

Whereas the United States has also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts;

Whereas the United States is expected to be a regional and global leader in the international civil and human rights movement; and

Whereas the United Nations headquarters are located in New York City, and the Organization of American States is headquartered in Washington, DC: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-  
2 representatives that—

3           (1) the United States recommits to fighting dis-  
4 crimination, xenophobia, human and civil rights  
5 abuses in both domestic and foreign policy;

6           (2) the United States reaffirms its commitment  
7 to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

8           (3) the United States should give thorough re-  
9 view to domestic policy and legislative proposals that  
10 would improve the economic, social, political, cul-  
11 tural, and civil rights and lives of marginalized com-  
12 munities within the United States;

13          (4) the United States Senate should give its ad-  
14 vice and consent to the ratification of the UN Cov-  
15 enant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the  
16 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
17 Discrimination Against Women and its Optional  
18 Protocol, the UN Convention on the Rights of the  
19 Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons  
20 with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, the UN  
21 Convention for the Protection of All Persons from  
22 Enforced Disappearance, the First Optional Protocol  
23 to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

1 and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention  
2 Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or De-  
3 grading Treatment or Punishment;

4 (5) the United States Senate should give its ad-  
5 vice and consent to the ratification of the ILO Con-  
6 vention on Forced or Compulsory Labour, the ILO  
7 Convention on Freedom of Association and Protec-  
8 tion of the Right to Organise, the ILO Convention  
9 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining,  
10 the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration, the  
11 ILO Convention on Discrimination in Respect of  
12 Employment and Occupation, and the ILO Conven-  
13 tion on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employ-  
14 ment;

15 (6) the United States should fully support the  
16 Inter-American human rights system, especially  
17 hemispheric conventions regarding the rights of all  
18 persons, women, children, the disabled, marginalized  
19 communities, and the right to freedom of expression;  
20 and

21 (7) it is the policy of the United States to op-  
22 pose slavery, torture, racism, discrimination, and  
23 xenophobia in all forms.

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